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For Immediate Release: January 15, 2008
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Ware Fatal Fire Electrical

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan, Ware Fire Chief Thomas Coulombe and Ware Police Chief Dennis Healey announced their joint investigation has determined the cause of the January 14, 2008 fatal fire at 18A Park Street was electrical. The fire in the 5-unit apartment building took the life of a woman in her 60's who lived on the second floor. Investigators found that the fire started in the space between the first and second floors right under the second floor bedroom where the fire victim was found. The only heat source in this area was an electrical wire that had clearly failed.

State Fire Marshal Coan said, "This is the first fire death in 2008 and comes on the heels of the deadliest December in a decade."

Chief Coulombe said, "This is the first fatal fire in Ware in recent memory, and on behalf of the firefighters and the citizens of the town I want to express my condolences to the family and friends of the victim. I would also like to thank my own firefighters and those from Palmer, Warren and West Brookfield who provided mutual aid for their efforts to suppress the fire."

The fire was jointly investigated by investigators from the Ware Fire Department, Ware Police Department and state police assigned to the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

The fire victim was using portable heaters, heating pads and a hot plate to heat and cook in her apartment. Investigators suspect that these appliances may have contributed to the electrical overload that led to the failure, but were unable to determine that conclusively.

Watch For Warning Signs

People should watch for warning signs of electrical problems. These include:

- ◆ Fuses blowing or circuit breakers tripping frequently.
- ◆ Unusually warm or faulty outlets or switches.

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- ◆ A vague smell of something burning.
- ◆ A sizzling sound in the wall.

Any of these signs may indicate a potential problem. Contact a licensed electrician if you notice any of these signs. Fuses and circuit breakers are safety devices. They blow or trip when the amount of current cannot safely travel through the wires. *Trying to bypass the fuse or circuit breaker protection is an invitation to danger.*

Electrical Systems Pose Unseen Dangers

Just as all systems need maintenance and inspection, so does electrical wiring. As switches, receptacles and connections age, heat is generated and the risk of fires inside walls and at poor connections greatly increases. Because wiring is often hidden behind walls, electrical faults may be hard to detect except by properly trained electricians.

Have Electrical Systems Examined by a Licensed Electrician Every 10 Years

Have electrical systems examined by a licensed electrician every 10 years. A good electrician will look for electrical faults, check for warm switch plates and receptacles, and analyze the use of electricity to see if additional capacity is needed. It is important to help our homes keep up with the electrical demands of our changing lifestyles, changes in society and new technologies.